

JOHN MOORE HERITAGE SERVICES

AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION

AT

LAND TO REAR OF 25 HENLEY ROAD,

SHILLINGFORD, OXFORDSHIRE

NGR SU 4880 8915

On behalf of

Maria Lewicki

DECEMBER 2014

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REPORT ISSUED	23 rd December 2014
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Site Code	SFHR 14
JMHS Project No:	2843
Archive Location	The archive is currently held at John Moore Heritage Services and will be deposited with Oxfordshire County Museums Service with accession number OXCMS: 2013.136

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Summary

John Moore Heritage Services carried out an archaeological field evaluation at land to rear of 25 Henley Road, Shillingford, Oxfordshire. One machine-dug 20m long trench was excavated across the footprint of the proposed dwelling. Four cut features were investigated. The cut 1/06 positively represents an archaeological feature (sub-oval pit or linear ditch). Fragments of sheep or goat bones of uncertain date were recovered from its fill. Cut 1/09 represents a probable linear ditch and features 1/11 and 1/13 were interpreted as probable postholes. These features were undated.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Site Location (Figure 1)

The area of proposed development is located within the centre of Shillingford, on the southern side of Henley Road and on the eastern side of Wharf Road (NGR SU 5953 9277). The area lies at approximately 47.5m OD and the underlying geology is river terrace gravels.

1.2 Planning Background

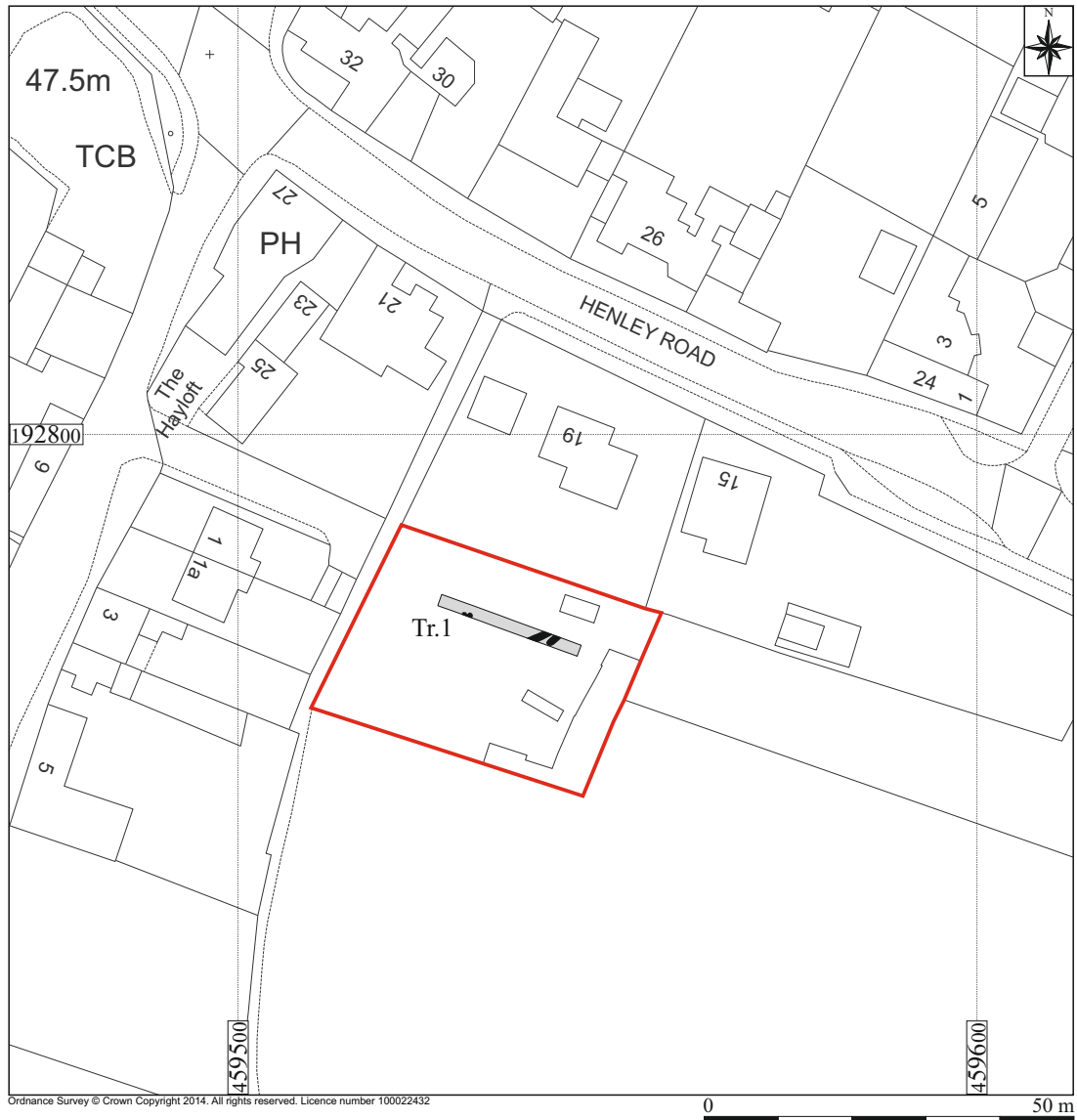
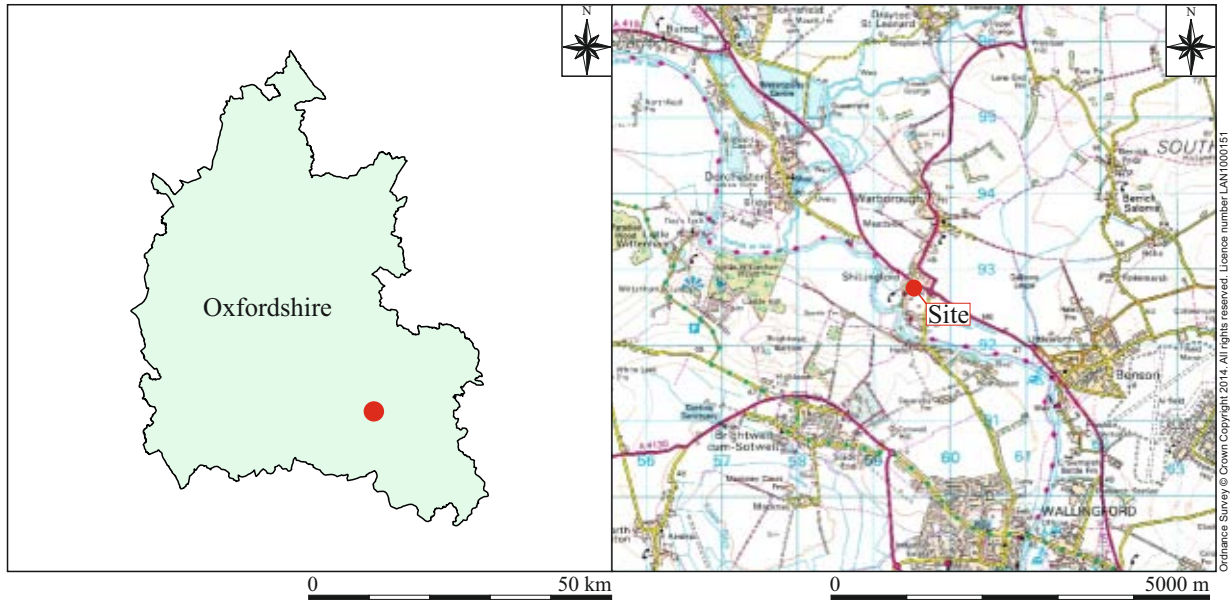
South Oxfordshire District Council has granted planning permission for demolition of existing outbuildings and erection of single storey dwelling (P14/S0948/FUL).

Due to the presence of archaeological features in the vicinity, Oxfordshire Historic and Natural Environment Team (OHaNET) required a staged programme of archaeological field evaluation. OCAS prepared a *Design Brief for Archaeological Field Evaluation* (OCAS 2013).

John Moore Heritage Services (JMHS) were commissioned to undertake this work, and a *Written Scheme of Investigation* (JMHS 2013) was prepared to satisfy the requirements of the *Brief*. This *Written Scheme of Investigation* (WSI) proposed the methodology by which the archaeological field evaluation was to be carried out.

1.3 Archaeological Background

The site is located within an area of archaeological potential identified through aerial photographs. A number of cropmark sites are recorded for the area including the scheduled monument at Warborough (SM144) 700m to the north east of the site. The site consists of ring ditches, a reputed cursus although now generally claimed to be a trackway, and other monuments, enclosures and a settlement site. A rectangular enclosure has been identified through cropmarks along with a linear feature and a possible trackway immediately south east of the proposed site (County Historic Environment Record PRN 15367). Although these features are undated it is likely that they are prehistoric or Roman in origin based on their form. A large linear cropmark, possibly part of a Roman Road, and a series of probable Roman field systems have been identified 160m north west of the site (PRN 8578) (JMHS 2013, OCAS 2013).



Key Site boundary Evaluation trench Archaeological features

Figure 1: Site location

2 AIMS OF THE INVESTIGATION

The aims of the investigation as laid out in the WSI were:

- To establish the presence/absence of archaeological remains within the site.
- To determine the extent, condition, nature, character, quality and date of any archaeological remains encountered.
- To assess the ecofactual and environmental potential of the archaeological features and deposits.

And in particular:

- To establish whether there are prehistoric and/or Roman remains associated with the cropmark features known in the vicinity of the site.

3 STRATEGY

3.1 Research Design

In accordance with the Brief issued by OCAS (2013) and the WSI by JMHS (2013), JMHS carried out the work, which comprised a scheme for the mechanical excavation of trial trenches across the footprint of proposed dwelling. Site procedures for the investigation and recording of potential archaeological deposits and features were defined in the WSI (Sections 3.1 – 3.4).

The recording was carried out in accordance with the standards specified by the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (IfA 2008) and the principles of MoRPHE (English Heritage 2006).

3.2 Methodology

A five tonne excavator fitted with a toothless 1.5m wide ditching bucket was used to excavate one 20m long trench, which was relocated from the proposed location and placed across the footprint of proposed new dwelling. The ground was reduced down to the archaeological horizon.

Archaeological deposits and features revealed were then cleaned by hand and recorded at an appropriate level. Archaeological features had written, drawn and photographic records made of them, and all deposits and features were assigned individual context numbers.

All artefacts were collected, analysed and not retained.

4 RESULTS

4.1 Field Results

All features were assigned individual context numbers. Context numbers with no brackets indicate feature cuts, numbers in round brackets () show feature fills or deposits of material and numbers in bold indicate any form of masonry.

4.2 Trench 1 (Figure 2)

Trench 1 was 20m long, 1.6m wide, and on average 1m deep. It was aligned northwest to southeast, and located approximately 7m to the south from the north site boundary (Fig. 1, Pl. 1).



Plate 1: Trench 1, looking southeast

The lowest deposit encountered in Trench 1 was a layer mid brown sand gravel with frequent patches of dark brown silty sand (1/05) interpreted as the natural river terrace gravel (Pl. 1).

Cut into deposit (1/05) were three archaeological features 1/09, 1/11 and 1/13 (Fig 2). The fill of these features was slightly darker than patches of silty sand within natural deposit (1/05).

The linear cut 1/09 was about 2.30m long within the trench and 1.05m wide being up to 0.20m deep (Fig. 2, S 1.3; Pl. 2). The profile of the cut was shallow with concave

sides and flat base. The fill (1/10) was a dark brown sandy silt with <5% of gravel inclusions. No dating evidence was recovered from the fill (1/10).



Plate 2: Possible ditch 1/09, looking southwest

The probable posthole cut 1/11 was of sub-circular shape (Fig. 2, Pl. 3), 0.65m long, 0.50m wide and 0.40m deep (Fig. 2: S.1.4) with steep stepped sides and concave base. The fill (1/12) was described as dark brown sandy silt, contained c. 10% of small well-rounded stones. No finds were recovered from the fill.

The cut 1/13 was of oval shape, measuring 0.50m in length and 0.40m in width (Fig. 2, Pl. 3). It was 0.22m deep with shallow concave sides and concave base (Fig. 2: S.1.4). The fill (1/14) was a dark brown sandy silt mixed with c. 5% on average fine gravel. No finds were recovered from the fill. Based on dimensions and location, cut 1/13 was interpreted as a probable posthole.

Overlying features 1/09, 1/11, and 1/13 was 0.32m thick deposit of mid brown silty sand (1/04), interpreted as a subsoil. The following deposit was 0.08m thick, layer of gravel in a matrix of mid brown silty sand (1/03), identified as an alluvial deposit (Fig. 2: S.1.1, Pl. 4).

Cut into deposit (1/03) was sub-oval or linear cut 1/06 (Fig. 2, Pl. 5). It was 1.60m long, 1m wide and 0.28m deep with shallow concave sides and rounded base (Fig. 2: S.1.2). The primary fill (1/08) was a light brown silt, with no finds and the secondary fill (1/07) was described as dark grey brown silt containing animal bones (See 5.1). The cut 1/06 might represent a large sub-oval pit or terminus of ditch.

The cut 1/06 was overlaid by 0.40m thick layer of mid brown loamy silt (1/02) (Fig. 2: S.1.1, Pl. 4). Deposit (1/02) presumably represents buried cultivation soil.

The entire trench was sealed by 0.25m thick dark grey-brown loam (1/01), modern topsoil (Fig. 2: S.1.1, Pl. 4).

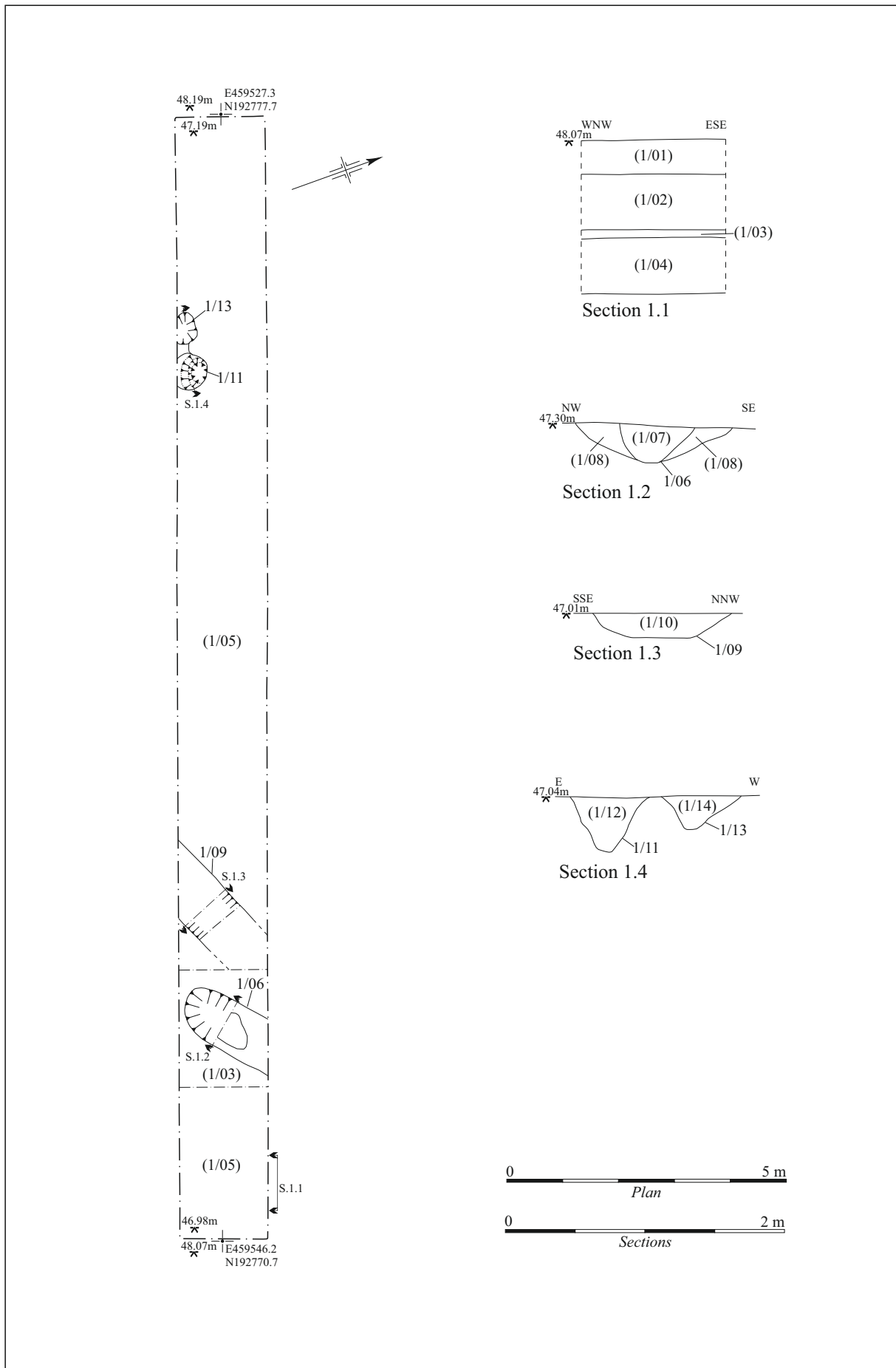


Figure 2: Trench 1 - plan and sections



Plate 3: Possible postholes 1/11 and 1/13, looking southwest



Plate 4: Representative section 1.1, looking northeast



Plate 5: Pit or ditch 1/06, looking northeast

4.3 Reliability Results

The reliability of results is considered to be good. The archaeological evaluation took place in generally clement conditions with excellent visibility.

5 FINDS AND ENVIRONMENTAL REMAINS

5.1 Osteological material

An assemblage of 34 fragments (135g) of animal bones recovered from fill (1/07) was identified as fragments of sheep or goat of uncertain date.

5.2 Palaeo-environmental Remains

No deposits suitable for palaeo-environmental analysis were identified, and no samples were taken.

6 DISCUSSION

The archaeological field evaluation was successful and meets the aims, which were laid out in the WSI.

In general, five deposits (1/01), (1/02), (1/03), (1/04), and (1/05) represent the geological and cultivation activities on the site.

Three cut features 1/09, 1/11, and 1/13, were identified as probable archaeological features based on their shape and the colour characteristic of their fills. The stratigraphic sequence suggests a prehistoric date for these features. However the

absence of finds and the similarity of their fills to the natural geology, might suggest, that these feature were of geological origin.

Pit or ditch 1/06 which contained animal bones, stratigraphically was later than the above described features. Due to absence of diagnostic finds the date of this feature is uncertain.

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Appendix 1: Trench Context Inventory

ID	Type	Description	Depth	Length	Width	Finds	Interpretation	Date
Trench 1								
1/01	Deposit	Dark grey-brown loam with occasional charcoal	0.25m	20m	1.5m	CBM, Glass	Topsoil	Modern
1/02	Deposit	Mid brown loamy silt	0.40m	20m	1.5m	-	Buried cultivation layer	-
1/03	Deposit	Gravel in a matrix of mid brown silty sand	0.08m	20m	1.5m	-	Alluvial deposit	-
1/04	Deposit	Mid brown silty sand	0.32m	20m	1.5m	-	Subsoil	-
1/05	Deposit	Mid brown sandy gravel with frequent patches of dark brown silty sand	N/A	20m	1.5m	-	Natural alluvial deposit	-
1/06	Cut	Sub-oval or linear cut with shallow concave sides and rounded base,. Orientation: NE-SW	0.28m	1.60m	1m	N/A	Pit or ditch	Uncertain
1/07	Fill	Dark grey-brown silt	0.28m	1.10m	0.52m	Animal bones	Fill of 1/06	Uncertain
1/08	Fill	Light brown silt	0.28m	1.60m	1m	-	Fill of 1/06	Uncertain
1/09	Cut	Linear cut with shallow concave sides and flat base. Orientation: ENE-WSW	0.20m	2.30m	1.05m	N/A	Possible ditch	Undated
1/10	Fill	Dark brown sandy silt with <5% gravel	0.20m	2.30m	1.05m	-	Fill of 1/09	Undated
1/11	Cut	Sub-circular cut with steep stepped sides and concave base	0.40m	0.65m	0.50m	N/A	Possible posthole	Undated
1/12	Fill	Dark brown sandy silt with c. 10% gravel	0.40m	0.65m	0.50m	-	Fill of 1/11	Undated
1/13	Cut	Oval cut with shallow concave sides and concave base	0.22m	0.50m	0.40m	N/A	Possible posthole	Undated
1/14	Fill	Dark brown sandy silt with c. 5% gravel	0.22m	0.50m	0.40m	-	Fill of 1/13	Undated